

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4130
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: PCI CONDEMNS SOVIET TRIALS

1. A FRONT-PAGE COMMENTARY JULY 11 IN THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) DAILY L'UNITA STRONGLY CRITICIZES THE SOVIETS FOR THE TRIALS THEY HAVE INITIATED AGAINST QUOTE SO-CALLED DISSIDENTS END QUOTE IN MOSCOW, KALUGA AND VILNIUS. THE NEWS OF THESE TRIALS, L'UNITA WRITES, IS SUCH AS TO QUOTE RAISE DEEP UNEASINESS AND REPROBATION END QUOTE.

2. THE L'UNITA COMMENTARY NOTES THE PCI'S REJECTION OF
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THE PRACTICE OF CONSIDERING AS A CRIME AGAINST THE STATE THE PROFESSION OF IDEAS WHICH DO NOT COINCIDE WITH THE OFFICIAL VIEWPOINT. AFTER NOTING THAT THE SOVIET ACTION CALLS INTO QUESTION A COMMITMENT TO CERTAIN PRINCIPLES TO WHICH THE USSR COMMITTED ITSELF AT HELSINKI, THE COMMENTARY STRESSES THAT WHAT REALLY IS AT ISSUE IS THE VERY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CITIZEN AND THE STATE IN WHICH HE LIVES.

IN THE VIEW OF THE UNSIGNED COMMENTARY, THE SOVIET ACTION CANNOT LEAVE INDIFFERENT COMMUNISTS AND NON-COMMUNISTS ALIKE WHO QUOTE LOOK TO SOCIALISM AS A SYSTEM CAPABLE OF AFFIRMING ITS OWN SUPERIORITY BOTH IN THE REALM OF IDEALS AND IN THE REALM OF HUMAN LIBERTY END QUOTE.

3. THE COMMENTARY POINTS OUT THE PCI'S CONCERN OVER THE IMPACT THAT THESE TRIALS CAN HAVE ON THE PROCESS OF DETENTE WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN SUBJECTED TO CERTAIN RECENT SETBACKS. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE RIGHT OF A STATE TO DEFEND ITSELF FROM INTERFERENCE BY OTHERS IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE COMMENTARY AFFIRMS THAT THE PCI IS AWARE OF THE ECHO THAT QUESTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES HAVE IN THE WORLD TODAY. IT CONCLUDES BY ASSERTING THAT QUOTE THE DANGER THAT PUNITIVE SENTENCES, WHICH DO NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THESE CIRCUMSTANCES (INTERNATIONAL OPINION), MIGHT BRING TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IS GRAVE AND CERTAIN. END QUOTE.

4. COMMENT: IN CONTRAST TO SEVERAL OTHER RECENT CASES (ORLOV IN THE SOVIET UNION AND BAHRO IN EAST GERMANY) IN WHICH THE PCI WAS SLOW IN REACTING, THE PCI HAS MOVED PROMPTLY TO EXPRESS ITS CONDEMNATION OF THE PRESENT SOVIET ACTION. UNDOUBTEDLY, THE MAGNITUDE OF PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE PRESENT CASES, IN CONTRAST TO THE RELATIVELY LIMITED ATTENTION GIVEN TO THOSE OF ORLOV AND BAHRO, OBLIGED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PCI TO PLAY ITS HAND RAPIDLY. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ONE ADDITIONAL FACTOR WHICH INFLUENCES PCI THINKING. THE PARTY STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT THE DETENTE PROCESS IS VITAL TO ITS FUTURE POLITICAL SUCCESS. CONVERSELY, IT BELIEVES THAT ANY SETBACK FOR EAST-WEST DETENTE COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT ON ITS EFFORTS TO MOVE EVER CLOSER TO ITS GOAL OF DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNING PROCESS. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PCI SEES THE CURRENT ROUND OF TRIALS IN THE SOVIET UNION AS A DIRECT THREAT TO ITS INTERESTS, AND HAS REACTED QUICKLY TO INSURE THAT ITS POINT OF VIEW IS A MATTER OF RECORD. GARDNER

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